

Bidder 70 Film: Eco-documentary chronicles trials and tribulations of environmental activist

Written by Kam Williams



The Bush administration's announcement in 2008 of its intention to auction-off the mining rights to many square miles of virgin land located in national forests ignited waves of protests by environmental activists. But when picketing, petitioning and the lobbying of politicians failed, the government proceeded with its plan to grant oil and gas mega-corporations access to the pristine parcels.

Crashing the auction was Tim DeChristopher, a frustrated college student who had participated in the pro-nature preservation demonstrations. He impulsively joined in the bidding and by the end of the day had purchased the rights to 22,000 acres of real estate in the Utah wilderness for \$1.7 million with the hope of somehow saving some soil from fracking.

Trouble is, he had neither funds nor the wherewithal to extract any minerals, which was a technical violation of federal law. And since the energy industry doesn't cotton to tree-huggers interfering its their profit margins and inclination to "Drill, baby drill!" it prevailed upon the government to throw the book at DeChristopher.

By the time the dust settled several years later, the outspoken economics major was convicted and carted off to prison to serve a two-year sentence. While DeChristopher's trials and tribulations are the front story of "Bidder 70," this eye-opening documentary co-directed by Beth

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and George Gage simultaneously issues an urgent call for non-violent civil disobedience on the part of citizens truly concerned about global warming and the unchecked consumption of non-renewable carbon.

A powerful, empathetic portrait of a selfless, planetary patriot willing to sacrifice his liberty for the sake of Mother Earth's long-term prospects.

Excellent (4 stars)

Unrated

Running time: 73 minutes

Distributor: First Run Features

To see a trailer for "Bidder 70," visit: http://firstrunfeatures.com/trailers_bidder70.html